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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001086

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)
SUBJECT: HAITIAN SENATE POSTPONES VOTE ON PM-DESIGNATE
PIERRE-LOUIS

REF: A. PORT AU PRINCE 1054
[1](#)B. PORT AU PRINCE 1070

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Thomas C. Tighe for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[¶](#)1. (C) Summary: The Haitian Senate on July 30 cancelled a planned vote on the eligibility of Michele Pierre-Louis for the post of Prime Minister. Three of the 18 senators initially present left the session prior to the official opening, breaking quorum and requiring the Senate President to call off the session. The Senators who boycotted the session, two from Fusion and one from OPL, have vocally opposed Pierre-Louis based on rumors of her homosexuality. However, Pierre-Louis' public statement on July 29 addressing this issue was believed to have persuaded at least two of them to vote in her favor. Fusion's leadership council is claiming their senators left the session under party instructions, because Preval failed to negotiate directly with political parties on his plan to bring party representatives into the next government. Several senators supporting Pierre-Louis vehemently criticized in public their three colleagues' failure to attend the session, but were privately optimistic that the session would be rescheduled immediately. That has not yet happened, however. End summary.

[¶](#)2. (C) Senate President Kely Bastien (Lespwa, North) convoked an official session July 30 to vote on the constitutional eligibility of Michele Pierre-Louis for the post of Prime Minister. Initial indications were that Pierre-Louis would easily receive the nine votes needed for ratification as PM and would then pass to the second stage, wherein she forms a cabinet and then presents her general policies to both chambers of Parliament for votes of confidence. However, prior to the final roll call three senators left the chamber: Senators Edmonde Supplice Beauzile (Fusion, Center), Judnel Jean (Fusion, Northeast) and Jean Joseph Pierre-Louis (OPL, Nippes). With just 15 senators remaining, President Bastien was forced to postpone the vote due to lack of quorum. He has yet to announce a new date for the session.

[¶](#)3. (C) Fusion spokesperson Micha Gaillard told Poloff July 31 that the Fusion senators were following instructions from

Fusion leadership to be absent from the session. Preval must speak to Fusion and the other parties directly if he wants to include them in the next government. Gaillard claimed Fusion is not aware of the specifics of the agreement reached between the Senate's "Group of Nine" and Preval (ref B), and had only heard vague outlines of a plan for the "integration of political parties" into Pierre-Louis' government. The Fusion leadership council does not accept Senators Youri Latortue and Rudy Heriveaux as "messengers of President Preval" regarding that agreement, said Gaillard. Gaillard said that for the moment, Fusion's senators will not/not attend Senate votes on Pierre-Louis' candidacy. (Note: When Poloff noted that Fusion senator Michel Clerie had attended the July 30 Senate session, Gaillard said Clerie had not yet at that time been informed of the decision of Fusion's leadership. End note.) As of 1000L on July 31, Preval had not reached out to Fusion to repair the rift, according to Gaillard.

¶4. (C) OPL Vice President Andris Riche (OPL, Grand'Anse), also VP of the Senate, denied publicly that Senator Pierre-Louis' absence was mandated in any way by OPL party leadership.

¶5. (C) The Senate's "Group of Nine" made two demands of Pierre-Louis prior to the July 30 session: that political party representatives be included in the cabinet and that Pierre-Louis make a public declaration denying allegations of homosexuality (ref A). The group divided into two sub-groups to address their demands. Having negotiated what they believed to be a fair deal with Preval on the first requirement, Senators Rudy Heriveaux (Lavalas, West) and Youri Latortue (Artibonite in Action, Artibonite) expressed to Polcouns on July 29 their confidence that Pierre-Louis

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would sail through the vote in the Senate. Subsequent to the aborted session, both senators chastised their colleagues for breaking the quorum and again expressed confidence that on July 31 the Senate would gather enough senators for a quorum and would vote in favor of Pierre-Louis.

¶6. (C) To address the second issue, Pierre-Louis made a radio statement July 29 calling allegations of her homosexuality "lies and slander." Senator Eddy Bastien (Alyans, Northwest) told Poloff July 30 that he and three of the other four senators focused on this issue were satisfied with this public statement. He had not been in touch with Senator Beauzile to ascertain her sentiments, but he said he saw no reason any of the senators would vote against Pierre-Louis on the basis of her sexual orientation.

¶7. (C) Senator Michel Clerie (Fusion, Grand'Anse) told Polcouns July 31 that Senator Beauzile talked the other two senators into leaving the session. He said her hostility to Pierre-Louis' candidacy (ref A) is implacable and stems from her moral opposition to homosexuality. (Note: MINUSTAH reps have suggested that Beauzile feels threatened by the possibility of another woman in a position of power. End note.)

¶8. (C) Comment: The latest attempt to confirm Michele Pierre-Louis failed due to the fluid, undisciplined relationship between elected officials and their political parties. Preval negotiated his deal for bringing political parties into the government exclusively with senators (ref B), bypassing the parties themselves. At least one party -- Fusion -- will not accept a deal brokered through the Senate.

It remains to be seen whether Preval will answer demands from Fusion to meet directly with political parties. If executed, a boycott by all three Fusion Senators of future Senate sessions would break a quorum and make confirmation of Michele Pierre-Louis impossible.

TIGHE